PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

CENTRAL WATERFRONT SITE
BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON

Prepared by
Washington State Department of Ecology

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INTRODUCTION

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) has developed this draft public participation plan in accordance to the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) to promote meaningful community involvement during the investigation and cleanup of the Central Waterfront site (Site) in Bellingham, Washington. Public participation is an integral part of Ecology's responsibilities under the MTCA. Ecology's goal is to provide the public with timely information and meaningful opportunities for participation that are commensurate with each site. Public participation plans are intended to encourage coordinated and effective public involvement tailored to the public's needs at a particular facility. This draft public participation plan describes the tools that Ecology plans to use to inform the public about the Site and identifies opportunities for the community to become involved.

LOCATION AND SITE BACKGROUND

Location

The Site is approximately 55-acres in size and is located on Bellingham's downtown waterfront, between Roeder Avenue, the Whatcom Waterway, the I&J Waterway, and the Aerated Stabilization Basin (see figure on page 4). Beginning in the early 1900's until the 1970's, the Site and surrounding filled tideland areas were filled to create the industrial "central waterfront" area of Bellingham.

Site Background

The Site is currently owned primarily by the Port of Bellingham (Port) and City of Bellingham (City) and has historically been used to support a variety of industrial activities including a municipal landfill, boat yards, foundry activity, bulk petroleum storage, and pulp and paper mill product storage. Previous environmental investigations of the Site indicate the presence of hazardous substances in groundwater, surface water, soil and/or sediments above state cleanup standards including total petroleum hydrocarbons, benzene, ethylbenzene, toluene, xylene, arsenic, cadmium, lead, nickel, copper, chromium, mercury, and cyanide. As a result, the Site is subject to the investigation and cleanup requirements of the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) administered by Ecology.

This Site is one of several cleanup sites being addressed as part of the Bellingham Bay Demonstration Pilot; a bay-wide, multi-agency initiative integrating sediment cleanup, control of pollution sources, habitat restoration and aquatic/shoreline land use.

This Site is a consolidation of four individual sites (Roeder Avenue Landfill, Chevron, Boatyard at Colony Wharf, Olivine uplands) each of which were previously listed independently on Ecology's Hazardous Site List. The four individual sites were consolidated into one site due to commingled groundwater contamination.

Olivine Uplands

The Olivine uplands property has been used for a variety of industrial activities since 1892. Historical land uses include lumber mills, a U.S Naval Reserve training facility, and foundry activity. From 1963 to 1992, Olivine Corporation leased the site to manufacture foundry sands

and refractory materials for incinerators. Groundwater testing in 1994 indicated low levels of barium, chromium, mercury and zinc. In 1998, an underground storage tank was removed and diesel contamination was detected in soils and in excavation pit water.

The Boatyard at Colony Wharf

The Boatyard at Colony Wharf is currently the location of both Colony Wharf and Bellingham Marine Industries. This area has been used for a variety of industrial activities since the early 1900's including: sales of building products (coal, lime, cement, plaster, brick & tile), former steel casting company foundry operations, a truck garage, manufacturing of cement products, boat repair and maintenance, machine shops and welding, fish and seafood distribution; electrical equipment manufacturing, sales and repair. Elevated concentrations of petroleum, benzene, cyanide, chromium and other contaminants have been detected in groundwater.

Chevron

Chevron operated a bulk petroleum terminal on Bellingham's waterfront from 1913 to 1987. Petroleum was received from tankers or barges at docks along the Whatcom Waterway or by rail car. The products were stored on site in above-ground storage tanks and were then distributed by rail or truck, or were used to fuel ships. The first environmental investigations at the site were initiated in 1986 after a 4800 gallon diesel fuel spill in the northeast tank farm. Subsequent investigations indicated the presence of soil and groundwater contamination beneath the facility, including within the other tank farm area.

Chevron conducted several remediation activities as part of an independent remedial action under MTCA. Activities conducted to date include the excavation and on-site bio-treatment of soils from the old tank farm, the removal of all the storage tanks and some of the underground and above-ground piping, the recovery of free-phase hydrocarbons and the evaluation of treatment alternatives for residual soil and groundwater contamination

Roeder Avenue Landfill

The Roeder Avenue Landfill opened in 1965 and served both as a municipal landfill for the City and disposal area for Georgia-Pacific (G-P) wood wastes. The Roeder Avenue Landfill closed in 1974 and G-P placed additional materials on top of the Landfill until 1996 including dredged sediments from the G-P lagoon construction area, wood waste, and spent limestone. In 2000, G-P, in coordination with the City and Ecology, constructed a 25,000-square-foot storage warehouse over a portion of the former Roeder Avenue Landfill. Low level metal contamination has been found in groundwater. Groundwater from the landfill flows southeast towards Whatcom Waterway and northwest towards I&J Waterway.

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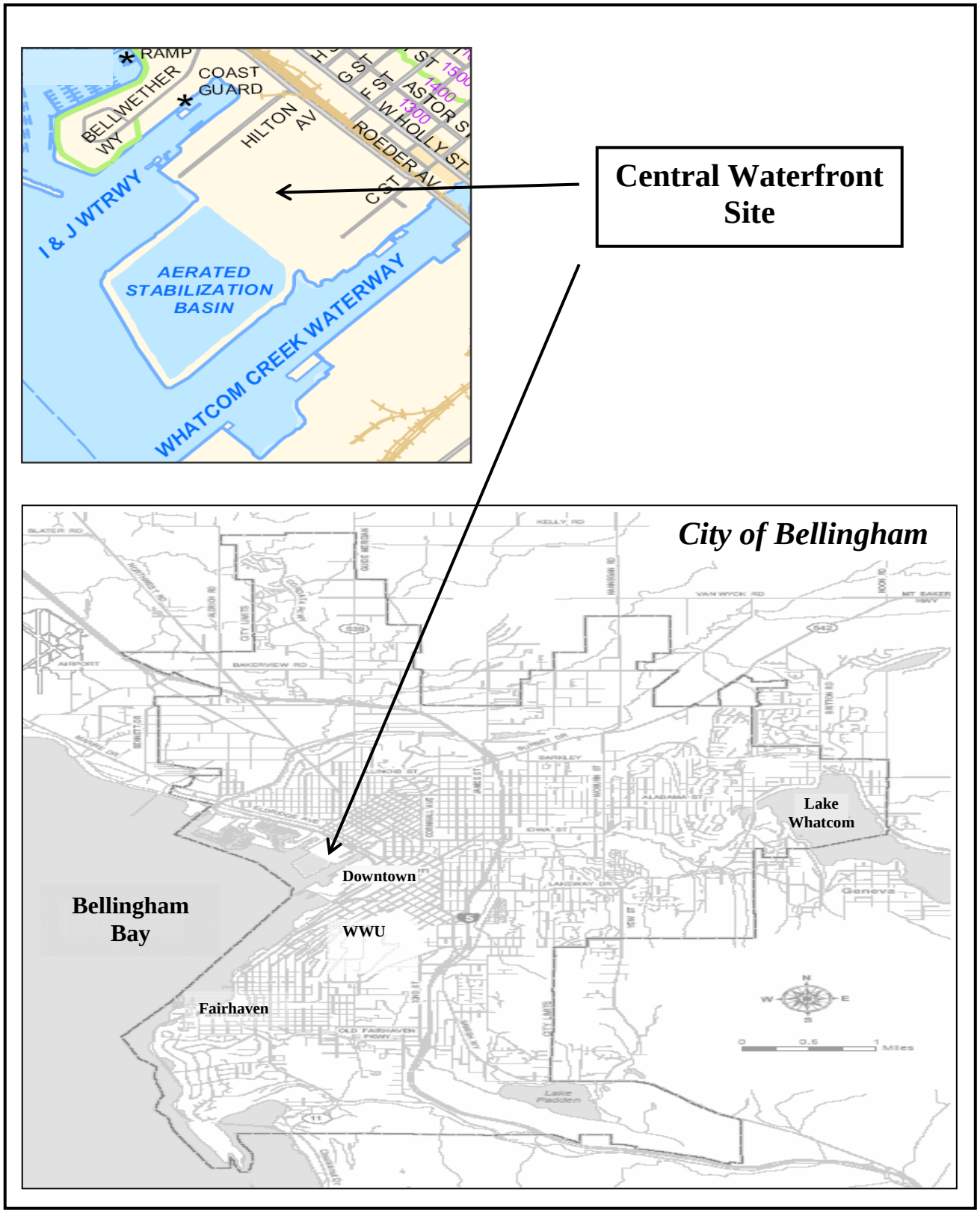
Location Map of Central Waterfront Site



HOW THE SITE WILL BE CLEANED UP

Investigation and Study

Initial work at the Site will focus on completing a remedial investigation and a feasibility study (RI/FS). The remedial investigation will determine the type, level, location and sources of contamination at the site. The feasibility study will evaluate a range of remedial alternatives that address the contamination, minimizing or eliminating the human health and environmental threats. Implementation of this work will lead to the generation of a draft RI/FS report. Ecology will solicit public comment on the draft RI/FS prior to finalization.

Cleanup

After the RI/FS is finalized, a draft Cleanup Action Plan (CAP) will be completed by Ecology that describes the remedial alternative preliminarily selected by Ecology. The CAP will be an exhibit to a legal agreement that compels cleanup of the site. The legal agreement and CAP will be issued for public review and comment prior to finalization. Actual cleanup will begin when the CAP is implemented. This includes design, construction, operation and monitoring of cleanup actions.

KEY COMMUNITY CONCERNS

Through the development of the Bellingham Bay Demonstration Pilot, including associated community outreach efforts, Ecology has preliminarily identified the following concerns and interests that may apply to the investigation and cleanup of the Site:

- Protection of human health and the environment
- Stewardship of adjacent aquatic lands
- Avoidance of impacts to important fisheries resources and habitats
- Coordination of cleanup actions with other Bellingham Bay site cleanups
- Opportunities for public involvement
- Compliance with regulatory requirements

Additional public concerns may be identified over the course of the Site cleanup through: public comment periods; community interviews; surveys; meetings; and other contacts with individuals, community groups, or organizations.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The purpose of this public participation plan is to promote public understanding and participation in the MTCA activities planned for this site. This section of the plan addresses how Ecology and the Port will share information and receive public comments and community input on the Site activities

Public Involvement Activities

Ecology uses a variety of activities to facilitate public participation in the planning and cleanup of MTCA sites. The following is a list of the public involvement activities that Ecology will use, their purposes, and how they will be used during the cleanup of the Site.

Formal Public Comment Period

Public comment periods usually last 30 days and are the primary method Ecology uses to get feedback from the public on proposed cleanup decisions. Public comment periods are required on all agreed orders, consent decrees and enforcement orders. Public comment periods are also required for all Ecology-conducted remedial actions.

During a comment period, the public can comment in writing. Verbal comments are taken if a public hearing is held. After formal comment periods, Ecology reviews all comments received and may respond in a document called a ***responsiveness summary***. A responsiveness summary is a summary of oral and/or written public comments received by Ecology during a comment period on key documents, and Ecology's responses to those comments.

Ecology will consider the need for changes or revisions based on input from the public. If significant changes are made, then a second comment period may be held. If no significant changes are made, then the draft document(s) will be finalized.

Public Meetings

Public meetings may be held at key points during the investigation and cleanup process. Ecology also may offer public meetings for actions expected to be of particular interest to the community. These meetings will be held at locations convenient to the community.

Information Repositories

During the comment period, the site documents will be available for review at information repositories. Ecology can also make copies of documents for a fee.

For this Site, the information repositories are:

- Bellingham Public Library, 210 Central Avenue, Bellingham
  Phone: (360) 676-6860

- Department of Ecology, Bellingham Field Office, 1204 Railroad Avenue, Suite 200
  Phone (360) 738-6250

- Department of Ecology, Northwest Regional Office, 3190 160th Avenue SE, Bellevue
  Phone: (425) 649-7190

Information on the Site will also be posted on the Ecology website at:
http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites/blhm_bay/sites/bel_bay_sites.html

Site Register

The Site Register is published by Ecology bi-monthly to inform the public of:

- Activities related to the study and cleanup of contaminated sites
- Public meetings/hearings and public comment periods
- Discussion or negotiations of legal agreements
- Availability of cleanup reports
- Hazard rankings of sites

If you would like to regularly receive the Site Register, please contact:

Site Register
Department of Ecology-Toxics Cleanup Program
PO Box 47600
Olympia WA 98504-7600
(360) 407-7170

If you would like to be placed on the Site Register's e-mailing list, complete the electronic form at http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/pub_inv/pub_inv2.html.

Mailing List

Ecology, with assistance from the Port, has compiled a mailing list for the Site. The list includes individuals, groups, public agencies, elected officials, private businesses, potentially affected parties, and other known interested parties. The list is maintained at Ecology's Northwest Regional Office and will be updated as needed.

Fact Sheets

Ecology will mail fact sheets to persons and organizations interested in the Site to inform them of public meetings and comment opportunities and important site activities. Ecology may also mail fact sheets about the progress of site activities.

Newspaper Ads

At a minimum, Ecology will place an ad in *The Bellingham Herald* to announce public comment periods and public meetings or hearings for the Site.

Plan Update

This public participation plan may be updated as the project proceeds. If an update is necessary, the revised plan will be submitted to the public for comment.

Public Points of Contact

If you have questions or need more information about this plan or this Site, please contact the following person:

Sunny Lin Becker, Site Manager
Washington State Department of Ecology
Northwest Regional Office
3190 160th Avenue SE
Bellevue, WA 98008-5452
(425) 649-7187

GLOSSARY

Cleanup: Actions taken to deal with a release, or threatened release of hazardous substances that could affect public health and/or the environment. The term "cleanup" is often used broadly to describe various response actions or phases of remedial responses such as the remedial investigation/feasibility study.

Cleanup Action Plan (CAP): A document that explains which cleanup alternative(s) will be used at sites for the cleanup. The Cleanup Action Plan is based on information and technical analysis generated during the remedial investigation/feasibility study and consideration of public comments and community concerns.

Comment Period: A time period during which the public can review and comment on various documents and Ecology or EPA actions. For example, a comment period is provided to allow community members to review and comment on proposed cleanup action alternatives and proposed plans. Also, a comment period is held to allow community members to review and comment on draft feasibility studies.

Consent Decree: A formal legal document, approved and issued by a court, which formalizes an agreement reached between the state (and EPA if involved) and the potentially liable person(s) on what will take place during the remedial investigation/feasibility study and/or cleanup action. A Consent Decree is similar to an Agreed Order except that a Consent Decree goes through the courts. Consent Decrees are subject to public comment. If a decree is substantially changed, an additional comment period is provided.

Feasibility Study (FS): This study uses information obtained in a remedial investigation to develop and evaluate a range of cleanup options for a site.

Information Repository: A file containing current information, technical reports, and reference documents available for public review. The information repository is usually located in a public building that is convenient for local residents such as a public school, city hall or library.

Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA): Legislation passed by the state of Washington in 1988. Its purpose is to identify, investigate, and clean up facilities where hazardous substances have been released. It defines the role of Ecology and encourages public involvement in the decision making process. MTCA regulations became effective March 1, 1989 and are administered by the Washington State Department of Ecology.

Potentially Liable Person (PLP): Any individual(s) or company(s) potentially responsible for, or contributing to, the contamination problems at a site. Whenever possible, Ecology requires these PLPs, through administrative and legal actions, to clean up sites.

Public Participation Plan: A plan prepared to encourage coordinated and effective public involvement designed to the public's needs at a particular site.

Remedial Investigation: This study characterizes the site and defines the type and extent of contamination.

Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study: Two distinct but related studies. They are usually performed at the same time, and together referred to as the "RI/FS." They are intended to:

- Gather the data necessary to determine the type and extent of contamination;
- Establish criteria for cleaning up the site;
- Identify and screen cleanup alternatives for remedial action; and
- Analyze in detail the technology and costs of the alternatives.

Responsiveness Summary: A summary of oral and/or written public comments received by Ecology during a comment period on key documents, and Ecology's responses to those comments. The responsiveness summary is especially valuable during the Cleanup Action Plan phase at a site when it highlights community concerns.

Site: Any building, structure, installation, equipment, pipe or pipeline (including any pipe into a sewer or publicly owned treatment works), well, pit, pond, lagoon, impoundment, ditch, landfill, storage container, motor vehicle, rolling stock, vessel, or aircraft; or any site or area where a hazardous substance, other than a consumer product in consumer use, has been deposited stored, disposed of, or placed, or otherwise come to be located.